

SALESIAN PROVINCE OF ST. JOHN PAUL II, SHILLONG

EDUCATION AND CULTURE DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL REPORT: 2024-25



1. Introduction

Under the dynamic leadership of Fr. Babu Stephen SDB, the Education and Culture Commission of the Salesian Province of Shillong has steadfastly pursued its mission to promote quality education and cultural enrichment in the spirit of Don Bosco. This report encapsulates the key initiatives, programmes, and achievements during the academic year 2024–2025.

Regional Coordinators

To ensure effective coordination and implementation of the Education and Culture Commission's initiatives across the province, the following confreres served as **Regional Coordinators** during the academic year 2024–2025:

- Fr. Denis Lalfella – Culture (Don Bosco Museum)
- Fr. Surjit Tigga – Coordinator for Barak Valley (Silchar)
- Fr. Gabriel Colney – Coordinator for Mizoram Region
- Br. Solomon Swer – Coordinator for Meghalaya Region
- Fr. Babu Stephen – Coordinator for Tripura Region cum Delegate for EC

These coordinators played a vital role in:

- Supervising region-specific activities and training programs
- Ensuring communication between local schools and the provincial commission
- Monitoring progress and addressing region-wise challenges
- Supporting the vision of holistic and value-based education in their respective regions

Their contributions have been instrumental in maintaining the **unity, adaptability, and effectiveness** of the commission's mission throughout the year.

2. Meetings and Collaborations

Three online meetings were conducted with full participation from all commission members. These meetings served as platforms for planning, reviewing, and strategizing activities at both regional and provincial levels. Collaboration among commission members and educational institutions was strengthened, fostering unity and a shared vision.

Principals' Meetings and Regional Collaboration

During the academic year 2024–2025, three **major Principals' Meetings** were conducted with the active participation of school heads from across the province. These gatherings served as vital platforms for policy discussions, training, evaluation, and mutual support:

Major Principals' Meetings:

1. **Agartala** – 5th to 7th February 2024
2. **Shillong** – 28th to 30th August 2024
3. **Silchar** – 1st to 3rd February 2025

These meetings focused on:

- Academic planning and review
- School policy implementation
- Administrative challenges and solutions
- Orientation on new educational initiatives and government mandates
- Sharing best practices among principals

Regional Principals' Meetings:

In addition to the province-level meetings, **numerous regional principals' gatherings** were organized by respective groups. These regional meetings:

- Facilitated focused discussions on local issues
- Strengthened cooperation and networking among nearby schools
- Helped ensure that provincial directives were contextualized and effectively executed

The ongoing collaboration among school leaders has been instrumental in upholding the Salesian educational vision across diverse regions.

3. Goals Set and Achieved

Goals

Achievements

Promote holistic education rooted in Salesian pedagogy **Incorporated Salesian values in all regional programmes**

Organize region-wise activities to promote student engagement **Successfully conducted activities in all regions**

Enhance teacher competencies **Multiple teacher training programmes held**

Provide student leadership training and co-curricular exposure **Leadership and skill-building programmes were well received**

Encourage inter-school collaborations through sports and competitions **Inter-school sports and competitions organized across regions**

4. Key Programmes Conducted (Region-wise)

A. Teachers' Training Programmes

Conducted in all regions: Shillong, Tripura, Assam, and Mizoram.

Focus Areas:

- Don Bosco's preventive system
- National Education Policy (NEP) 2020
- Inclusive education
- Classroom management

B. Students' Training Programmes

Topics Covered:

- Leadership
- Career guidance
- Life skills
- Digital literacy

C. Inter-School Competitions

- Quiz competitions on Don Bosco's life, general knowledge, and science.
- Essay and drawing competitions promoting creativity and expression.

D. Inter-School Sports Events

- Regional-level football, volleyball, and athletics tournaments held.
- Promoted teamwork, discipline, and sportsmanship.

E. Mini Boscree

- Organized as a highlight event of the year.
- Brought together young scouts and guides for training, games, and cultural presentations.

F. Cultural and Value-Based Events

- Cultural fests showcasing ethnic diversity and Christian values.
- Special assemblies and prayer services to deepen moral and spiritual formation.

5. Regional Highlights

- **Region Key Events**
- Shillong Inter-school quiz; Teacher workshop on value education
- Tripura Mini Boscoree; Student leadership camp
- Assam Sports meet; Science exhibition
- Mizoram Teachers' capacity-building workshop; Cultural festival

6. Institutional Overview: A. School Distribution

- | • Region | Number of Schools |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Meghalaya | 20 |
| • Tripura | 8 |
| • Mizoram | 5 |
| • Silchar | 1 |
| • Total Regular Schools | 34 |
| • Evening Schools | 2 (Shillong and Silchar) |

B. School Categories

- | • Category | Number of Schools |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| • Urban | 10 |
| • Semi-Urban | 5 |
| • Rural | 19 |
| • Higher Secondary | 25 |
| • Secondary | 8 |
| • Lower Primary | 1 |

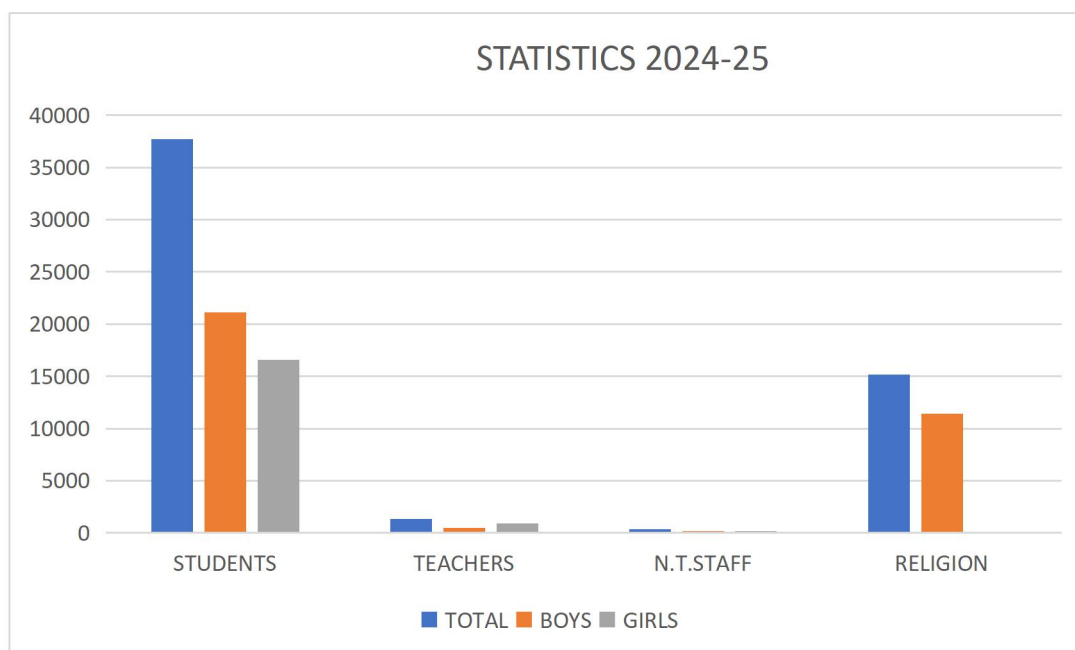
C. Affiliated Boards

- | • Board | Number of Schools |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| • CBSE | 4 |
| • TBSE | 5 |
| • MBSE | 5 |
| • MBOSE | 20 |

7. Student and Staff Statistics

A. Student Enrolment

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| • Total Students: | 37,723 |
| • Boys: | 21,148 |
| • Girls: | 16,575 |



B. Religious Demographics

- Catholics: 15,144
- Christians (non-Catholics): 11,422
- Hindus: 6,330
- Muslims: 2,725
- Others: 2,102

C. Teaching Staff

- Total Teachers: 1,366
- Male: 478
- Female: 888
- Catholics: 872
- Others: 494

D. Non-Teaching Staff

- Total Non-Teaching Staff: 367
- Male: 174
- Female: 193
- Catholics: 184
- Others: 183

E. Religious Personnel

- Total Religious Members: 133

8. Policies and Practices

A. Educational and Administrative Policies

- Admission Policy: Preference given to Catholic students; 50% concession for Catholic students; free education for very poor Catholics and others; 50% concession for children of staff.
- Evening Schools: Operated in Shillong and Silchar, providing free education and resources to neighbourhood children.

- Evening Shift Schools: Offer education at half the regular cost.
- Corporal Punishment: Strictly forbidden across all schools.
- Staff Assemblies: Daily assemblies in the principal's office include messages, prayers, and information dissemination.
- Personnel Policy: Explained to all staff members with individual copies provided.

B. Teacher Training Mechanisms

- Preventive System Training: Conducted at the beginning of the academic year and after half-yearly examinations.
- General Training: Organized region-wise to enhance teaching competencies.

9. Awards and Recognitions

- St. Xavier's School: 3rd Prize in National School Band Competition (Girls) – 2024; Best School Band Award in Tripura.
- St. Xavier's School: 2nd Prize in National School Band Competition (Boys) – 2025;
- Don Bosco School, Silchar: Best District Principal Award – 2022–23 and 2024–25.
- H. Elias School, Nongthymmai: Represented Meghalaya in the Subroto Cup four times (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019).

10. Three-Year Strategic Plan

- Documentation: Ensure all school-related documents are well-maintained.
- Salary Structure: Implement a decent salary pay scale across all 34 main schools.
- Eco-Friendly Initiatives: Promote eco-friendly practices, including the installation of solar energy systems.
- Wellness Facilities: Establish a wellness room in each school with a full-time counsellor and nurse.
- Skill-Based Education: Introduce skill-based and vocational subjects in alignment with NEP requirements.
- Teacher Selection Committees: Form committees in every school for the selection of teachers for private posts.

11. Province-Wide Policies

A. Institutional Policies

- **Personnel Policy:** Each school is guided by a comprehensive personnel policy that ensures professionalism, accountability, and alignment with Salesian values. Copies are shared with all staff members.
- **Child Protection Policy:** All schools have adopted a strict child safeguarding and protection policy, with regular training for staff and awareness sessions for students.
- **Don Bosco Sports Academy Policy:** This policy aims to nurture sporting talent among students through structured training, infrastructure development, and participation in state and national tournaments.
- **Green Alliance Policy:** Focused on sustainability, this policy promotes eco-friendly campus practices such as tree plantation, plastic-free environments, rainwater harvesting, and solar power usage.

B. Centralized Operations and Digital Advancement

- **School ERP Implementation:** All schools are progressively implementing a unified ERP system to streamline academic records, fee management, attendance, communication, and reporting.

- **Independent Website for Schools:** The province now hosts a dedicated website exclusively for all Don Bosco schools under its jurisdiction, offering centralized access to news, policies, and school-specific portals.
- **Uniform and Notebook Centralization:** Uniforms and notebooks across all schools have been standardized to reflect a unified identity and reduce costs. Distribution and quality control are managed centrally.
- **Province-Produced Uniforms:** All school uniforms are produced within the province itself, ensuring consistency, quality, and employment generation.

C. Strategic Excellence Initiatives

- **School of Excellence Programme:** 15 schools across the province have been shortlisted for elevation to the “**School of Excellence**” status. These schools will receive priority in infrastructural development, staff training, and holistic pedagogical support to serve as model institutions.

12. Innovations and Co-Curricular Developments

In line with the vision of holistic education and progressive infrastructure, the schools of the Salesian Province of Shillong have made significant strides in integrating modern technology and enhancing co-curricular opportunities for students. Notable developments include:

A. Technology and Infrastructure

- **Smart Classrooms:** Digital interactive panels have been installed in many schools, revolutionizing classroom teaching and making learning more engaging and effective.
- **Solar Energy Initiatives:** A few schools have taken the eco-friendly route by installing solar panels, contributing to sustainability and cost-saving in the long run.
- **School ERP System:** A common School ERP (Hembro) is being gradually introduced across institutions to streamline administrative processes and ensure better data management.

B. Co-Curricular Activities and Student Development

- **School Bands:** A couple of schools have established school bands, enhancing student involvement in music and school spirit.
- **Scouts and Guides Movement:** Around 20 schools have now actively integrated Scouts and Guides, instilling leadership and discipline among students.
- **NCC and Martial Arts:** A few schools have initiated NCC, **Karate**, and **Taekwondo** programs to promote physical fitness, discipline, and patriotism.
- **Cultural and Creative Clubs:** Dance, Literary, Yoga, Eco, Swaatch Bharat and Music clubs have been launched in some schools, nurturing creativity and artistic talent.
- **Educational Excursions:** Annual excursions are being organized in many schools, enriching students’ learning through exposure and experiences beyond the classroom.

13. Vocational Education and Skill Development

Recognizing the importance of practical skills and career readiness, **St. Xavier’s School, Pathaliaghat** has taken a pioneering step by introducing **vocational training programmes** for students from **Class VII to XII**.

The following skill-based courses are being conducted regularly and effectively:

- **Carpentry**
- **Beautician Training**
- **Tailoring**
- **Guitar**
- **Bakery**
- **Art and Craft**

These programmes are offered **free of cost** to all students and run in full swing throughout the academic year. The aim is to equip students with hands-on experience, foster creativity, and promote self-reliance. This initiative aligns well with the National Education Policy's emphasis on vocational training and is a model for other schools in the province.

14. Challenges and Areas of Concern

Despite many positive strides in education and school administration across the province, several pressing issues continue to require immediate and strategic attention:

A. Staff and Personnel Issues

- **Inadequate Salary Structures:** Many staff members are underpaid due to lack of proper pay scales and standardized salaries.
- **Lack of Qualified Teachers:** There remains a shortage of trained and competent teaching staff in some institutions.
- **Deficit Salaried Staff / Ghost Teachers:** Some schools employ proxy or non-teaching staff on paper, creating unjustified salary burdens.
- **EPF & Gratuity Irregularities:** Inadequate implementation of staff welfare schemes like Provident Fund and Gratuity.
- **Lack of Regular Staff Recruitment Process:** Staff appointments are often delayed or handled without proper interviews and screening.

B. Administrative and Documentation Gaps

- **Non-Regular School Managing Committee (SMC) Meetings:** Many schools are not conducting mandated SMC meetings consistently.
- **School Documentation Lapses:** Registration, affiliation, and compliance-related documentation is pending in some schools for years.
- **Financial Auditing & ITR Filing:** Timely audits and income tax return submissions are neglected in a few institutions.
- **School Chronicle Maintenance:** Schools are irregular in maintaining chronicles and records.

C. Student Welfare and Child Safety

- **Absence of Permanent Counsellor/Nurse/Infirmary:** There is an urgent need to appoint dedicated health and guidance personnel in schools.
- **Child Protection Policy Implementation:** While policies exist, enforcement and awareness remain inconsistent.
- **Use of Corporal Punishment:** Isolated incidents of corporal punishment still occur, requiring urgent correction and sensitization.
- **Lack of Proper Parent-Teacher Meetings:** Communication between schools and parents is not systematic in many places.

D. Infrastructure and Technological Gaps

- **Poor Infrastructure and Maintenance:** Many schools lack quality classrooms, playgrounds, safe drinking water, toilets, and electrical fittings.
- **ERP and CCTV:** Only a few schools have adopted ERP or installed CCTV systems, resulting in inefficiencies and safety issues.
- **Financial Constraints:** Several schools are burdened with deficits and cannot sustain basic improvements.

E. Academic and Pastoral Dimensions

- **Catechism, Moral Science & First Friday Mass:** These elements are irregular or absent in some schools.
- **Discipline and Educational Quality:** Standards of discipline among staff and students need close monitoring and corrective measures.

- **Low Student Enrolment:** Competition from numerous private institutions in proximity has reduced enrolment in some schools.
- **Poor Implementation of Central Policies:** Province-wide policies, such as centralization of uniforms and notebooks, are not followed uniformly.

F. Youth Groups and Co-Curricular Activities

- **Weak or Inactive Student Movements:** NCC, Scouts/Guides, SYM, and Past Pupils' Associations are inactive or underutilized in many schools.
- **Sports Academy and Physical Education:** Lack of encouragement, facilities, and trained personnel hampers sports development.

G. Salesian Identity and Formation

- **Weak Salesian Presence:** Some schools lack regular assembly talks, value-based sessions, and Salesian animation.
- **Inadequate Orientation and Formation:** Teachers and students need more systematic orientation throughout the academic year.
- **Leadership Training:** Principals and school heads need updating courses and exposure to best practices.

H. Province Contributions and Coordination

- **Annual Contributions and Salary Support:** Some schools struggle to make annual contributions to the province or cover confreres' salaries.

15. Way Forward: Vision for the Future

As the Salesian Province of Shillong moves ahead with renewed purpose and clarity, the following strategic directions are proposed to ensure holistic growth, sustainability, and excellence in all our educational institutions:

A. Strengthening Infrastructure and Human Resources

- Implement standard pay scales and ensure dignified salaries for teaching and non-teaching staff across all regular schools.
- Recruit and retain qualified, committed, and mission-oriented educators; ensure fair and transparent interview and appointment processes.
- Ensure each school has full-time counsellors, nurses, and wellness rooms to care for the emotional and physical well-being of students.

B. Reinforcing Governance and Documentation

- Mandate regular School Managing Committee (SMC) meetings, proper school documentation, timely registration, and affiliation updates.
- Conduct annual financial audits and ITR filing across all institutions to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Maintain school chronicles and yearbooks as historical records.

C. Ensuring Child Protection and Discipline

- Enforce the Child Protection Policy strictly in all schools.
- Continue to prohibit corporal punishment, promoting discipline through Don Bosco's preventive system.
- Regularly orient staff and students on safe environment policies.

D. Boosting Quality of Education

- Promote continuous teacher training and orientation on pedagogy, NEP 2020, digital tools, and Salesian values.
- Encourage regular Parent-Teacher Meetings to foster community and transparency.
- Improve discipline and academic quality through monitoring and mentoring mechanisms.

E. Enhancing Facilities and Eco-Consciousness

- Upgrade toilets, drinking water, playgrounds, and lighting in all campuses.
- Expand the installation of solar panels to ensure eco-friendliness.
- Promote Clean and Green Campus campaigns with student involvement.

F. Promoting Clubs and Youth Movements

- Strengthen Scouts and Guides, NCC, SYM, Past Pupils' Associations, and other youth movements to ensure student engagement and leadership.
- Expand access to clubs and extracurriculars (Karate, Taekwondo, Dance, Music, etc.) for holistic development.

G. Expanding Vocational and Skill Education

- Scale up the vocational training model of St. Xavier's Pathaliaghat to other schools by introducing courses like tailoring, bakery, beautician skills, and carpentry.
- Ensure alignment with NEP 2020's emphasis on skill-based and vocational subjects.

H. Technological Integration and Centralization

- Implement School ERP and CCTV across all institutions for efficient administration and safety.
- Continue centralized production of uniforms and notebooks, maintaining quality and uniformity.

I. Establishing Schools of Excellence

- Monitor and mentor the 15 identified Schools of Excellence, focusing on pedagogy, innovation, and outcomes.
- Foster inter-school collaboration, peer learning, and Salesian benchmarking.

J. Strategic Outreach and Enrolment

- Combat declining enrolment by enhancing visibility, ensuring quality, and differentiating the Salesian identity in a saturated education market.
- Promote evening schools and concessions for the poor and marginalized as a core mission outreach.

16. Conclusion

This comprehensive and actionable roadmap ensures that the province remains faithful to Don Bosco's vision while dynamically responding to emerging needs and challenges. With collective commitment and trust in Divine Providence, the future of Salesian education in the province remains bright and transformative. The Education and Culture Commission, under the guidance of Fr. Babu Stephen SDB, has made significant strides in advancing the educational mission of the province. The year was marked by effective planning, enthusiastic participation, and fruitful execution of programmes.

Fr. Babu Stephen SDB

Delegate, Education and Culture, INS